



NEWS RELEASE

16-226

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District: District 8/San Bernardino
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Are You Weather Ready?

SAN BERNARDINO – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 8 is urging the motoring public to get “weather ready”. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is forecasting a storm Sunday evening through Monday afternoon with rain and the possibility of snow in upper elevations of 7,000 feet and higher (Big Bear region).

Weather forecasters have predicted that the 2016-2017 winter may bring colder, drier conditions brought on by a La Nina pattern in the Pacific Ocean. As the drought continues in California, weather patterns have been unpredictable. But one thing is certain, being prepared for any weather condition is imperative for the safety traveling public, especially in fire scarred areas such as the Cajon Pass region and San Bernardino Mountains.

The collapse of State Route 330 in winter 2010 and Interstate 10 at Tex Wash in summer 2015 is a vivid reminder that severe storms can bring heavy downpours that catch motorists off guard. Caltrans has hired additional staffing in mountain and desert regions to ensure 24-hour coverage during these weather events. In addition, Caltrans maintenance work and construction projects continue during dry weather to maintain and secure highways for the traveling public. While careful planning and evaluation is taking place across the region, the weather impact on the drought-stricken terrain cannot be predicted.

Helpful tips for motorists:

- Plan ahead and check weather and road conditions before you leave.
- Ensure that vehicles are in good working condition and have a full tank of gas before traveling. Check tires, brakes, wipers, antifreeze, heaters and exhaust systems.
- **BRING CHAINS WHEN TRAVELING TO MOUNTAIN AREAS!**
- Use headlights during weather events, “see and be seen.”
- Reduce vehicle speed on wet surfaces and allow a safe following distance from other vehicles. Rain, oil, and dust equal slippery conditions and traction problems on roads.
- Always look ahead and pay attention signs and barricades.
- Avoid driving through running or standing water, putting yourself, passengers, and your vehicle at risk. An average-sized vehicle can float in as little as 12 inches of water; deeper, moving water can carry vehicles away. **TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN!**
- Drive with caution and **MOVE OVER** for road workers, law enforcement and emergency responders. Stay safe by obeying traffic commands from crews on the highway!
- Bring blankets, water, food, a shovel, gloves, flashlight and a charged cell phone.

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Emergency officials are urging the public to Plan, Prepare, Practice and Ready Set Go. For more information go to <http://sbcfire.org/Programs/ReadySetGoFlood.aspx>, <http://www.rvcfire.org/onLineServices/Safety/Documents/Household%20Safety%20Handouts/interWise.pdf> and http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/winter_safety.html#.VKbOLivF9nX.

Motorists traveling to mountain areas should *ALWAYS* prepare for unforeseen events and changes in weather that can cause immediate road closures or extended periods of time on the highway. Be reminded that snow events bring mountain tourism which results in lengthy traffic delays. Motorists should maintain patience and follow all traffic laws. Please remember to keep the roadways and mountain areas clean by putting litter in its place. Do not leave items behind!

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